

Minutes of the
War Committee of the Cabinet
October 28, 1942.

SECRET

Ottawa, October 28th, 1942.

CABINET WAR COMMITTEE

A meeting of the War Committee of the Cabinet was held in the Privy Council office on Wednesday, October the 28th, at 3 p.m.

There were present the following members:

The Prime Minister (Mr. King), in the Chair,
The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston),
The Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley),
The Minister of Transport (Mr. Michaud),
The Minister of National Defence for
Naval Services (Mr. Macdonald),
The Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent).

The Under-Secretary of State for External
Affairs (Mr. Robertson),
The Secretary (Mr. Heeney).

Mr. J. R. Baldwin, Privy Council office.

War Committee procedure - Minutes - follow-up
of decisions.

1. The Prime Minister stated that it would be of assistance in the preparation of War Committee minutes if a member of the Privy Council office staff were to attend regular meetings to prepare draft notes of proceedings.

2. Mr. King said it had been suggested that it would be helpful in "following up" War Committee decisions to circulate, fortnightly, to Ministers concerned, forms setting out decisions in order that departments might insert a statement of action taken, for return to the Privy Council office for the information and record of the War

a competition in reputation and moral principles of the Geneva Convention, and that persistence by the Axis in their present policy would result in treatment of the individuals responsible as war criminals. It had been suggested that such a declaration be accompanied by announcement of a decision to unshackle prisoners in our hands, and an invitation to the German government to do likewise.

This proposal had been repeated to other Commonwealth government and drawn to the attention of the United States. The government of South Africa had already expressed approval.

(Secretary's note, October 27, 1942 - C.W.C. document 315).

6. The Prime Minister said that this proposal had been made after consultation with the Minister of National Defence, and at the specific suggestion of Mr. Massey, as being in accord with the War Committee's views. It was now urged that a further telegram be sent pointing out the dangers of delay.

Opinion, generally, in the United Kingdom as well as in Canada, the rest of the Commonwealth and the United States was opposed to shackling of prisoners. The U. K. government was adopting an attitude of delay in the hope of receiving from Germany a reply to the representations made through the Protecting Power.

7. Mr. King reported that representations had been received from the Japanese government, through the Spanish Consul, protesting against alleged ill-treatment of Japanese in Canada. These representations were without foundation and had been answered in detail by External Affairs.

8. The Minister of National Defence for Naval Services suggested that, from the practical point of view, it might be advisable to omit reference to inhumanity and cruelty, and punishment of war criminals, in the proposed declaration, and that the German prisoners might actually be unshackled before any declaration were made regarding the Geneva Convention.

9. The War Committee, after further discussion, agreed that a further communication be drafted to the U. K. government emphasizing the views already expressed, which clearly represented the growing